The IDLER

Public Occurrences, Comment, Excursions & Rational Entertainment

Nr 30 APRIL 1967 25c THE COPY

On to Victory

IN SEARCH OF MINOR PROFIT

In Which the Price of Victory in Vietnam is Examined; LBJ and the Carpenters; a Grim Fairy Tale by Sam A. Darcy; the Thinking Man's Commercial; As Well as Several Other Diversions.

"The pressure will be increased," said Senator Fulbright the other day, "and they will decimate these people to where they do give up, and then we will begin reconstruction. We will rebuild roads. We will build houses. We will bring them the good life at vast costs to this country. It will not, in my opinion, result in an acceptable society from the point of view of the Asians."

Here is the nub of the problem in Vietnam. It is not a question of if we can win the war there, for we are fully capable of fighting until we do, to the last Vietnamese if necessary. It is not a question of when we shall win the war, for five years more or less shall make little difference to a country that has adjusted with brutal efficiency to the human and economic demands of a prolonged, broad conflict.

The problem is how we win the war. Perhaps, at one time, there were a variety of possible solutions to this problem. Perhaps we could have created an economic assistance program that matched our military effort. Perhaps we could have fostered a government that would earn the support of the Vietnamese rather than their contempt and distrust. Perhaps we might have geared our military action so as to complement rather than contradict our nonmilitary goals.

Perhaps. They are big perhaps. But today, in any case, they are irrelevant. History has taken its toll. Our course is set. We are deeply committed to a policy of massive military vengeance.

One need only examine the amount we are spending for the so-called "other war" of pacification to realize what a charade is our talk of "winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese." If pacification comes, it will be the peace of the dead, the maimed, and the broken. Mr. Johnson intends to come home with the coonskin, whatever the price.

Of course, there is always the danger that peace will break out. But fortunately for the advocates of escalation, we have driven Ho Chi Minh into such a corner that he will probably reject, as he has several times in the past, reasonable peace proposals. We are therefore safe in announcing our full support of such proposals and then using Hanoi's rejection as a rationalization for further intensification of the war. It is very neat and very deadly.

But the thing we must understand is this: When Mr. Johnson gains his military victory, we shall stand triumphant over an American-created hell. We are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Idler

Published 11 months a year in Washington, D. C., for the edification, information, and entertainment of its readers. Thirty-five Cents the copy. Three Dollars a year (Four Dollars abroad).

Contents Copyright 1967 by The Idler. Permission is granted to reproduce articles from The Idler, provided The Idler is given proper credit and a copy of the reprinted article is sent us.

Material independently copyrighted or upon which rights have been reserved may not be reproduced without the permission of the author or copyright holder.

Editor: sam smith
413 Sixth St. NE
Washington 2, D.C.
202-546-9662

Associate Editors:
Mike Bell
Erbin Crowell

Circulation, correspondence, coffee:
Sally Crowell

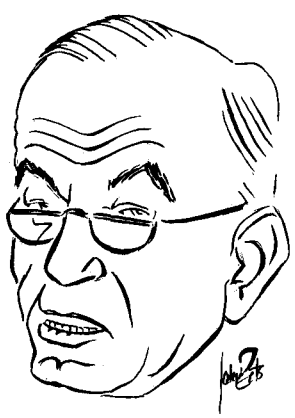
daily wrecking Vietnam in every physical and non-physical sense. And the prospect of reconstruction tomorrow can not compensate for the fury of destruction today. We claim that our acts are in the name of freedom and democracy. Such a claim would be questionable justification for an annihilation policy, even if it were true, which it isn't. In truth, our presence in Vietnam is motivated by complex geo-political assumptions of doubtful validity. At the kindest, the game is called international power politics. At the worst, it is called imperialism. But whatever the name, it is a game without moral basis, for whatever morality might once have supported our position in Vietnam, it was long ago overwhelmed by the manner in which we exercised our presence. The war in Vietnam amounts to a grim repetition of a tragedy common in history: A battle between mighty antagonists in search of some minor profit, fought in a far-off land, to the utter destruction of the country unfortunate enough to be chosen as the battleground.

"I think," Mr. Johnson has said, "that the American people should know that this is a question between their President, their country, their troops, and Mr. Ho Chi Minh and the troops that he is sending in from the North. Everyone can take whatever side of the matter he wants to."

The President is incorrect. It is a question between human decency and the brutalities of international politics. Neither our country nor the communists have taken the steps necessary to prevent the growth of the present pointless mayhem. History will damn them both.

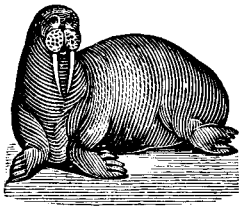
Perhaps, sadly, America will be damned most of all. For we have the strength and the opportunity to compromise, to lead towards peace, to back off, but we have rejected the possibility at almost every turn. We have rejected the efforts of our allies, the Pope, the United Nations and even the Russians, to inject an element of sanity into the conflict.

We have consistently refused to take affirmative action to ease the conflict in Vietnam. Lip-service to peace proposals is not enough.



FULBRIGHT: Unacceptable Society

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LBJ and the Carpenters

(Mr. Johnson likes to present himself as a temperate man of peace holding the line against militaristic hawks who wish to escalate the war. With each intensification he tells us how sorry he is and word is leaked that the hawks wanted still further escalation but the President said no. This business sounded strangely familiar and I found out why in the children's room of the local public library):

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low:
And l all the little Oysters stood and
waited in a row. . . .

"It seems a shame, " the Walrus said
"To play them such a trick.
After we've brought them so far,
And Made them trot so quick!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"The butter's spread too thick!"

"I weep for you, " the Walrus said:
"I deeply sympathize. "
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

"O Oysters, " said the Carpenter,
"You've had a pleasant run!
Shall we be trotting home again?"
But answer came there none--
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd eaten every one. "

"I like the Walrus best, " said Alice: "because he was a little sorry for the poor oysters. "

"He ate more than the Carpenter, though, " said Tweedledee. "You see he held his handkerchief in front, so that the Carpenter couldn't count how many he took: contrariwise. "

"That was mean!" Alice said indignantly. "Then I like the Carpenter best--if he didn't eat so many as the Walrus. "

"But he ate as many as he could get, " said Tweedledum.

That was a puzzler. After a pause, Alice began, "Well, they were both very unpleasant characters--. "

We have said, many times not very convincingly, that we would move reciprocally with the North Vietnamese. The North Vietnamese have refused to budge, so we have too. But must our capacity for just and reasonable action be reduced to the level of our adversary's?

Hanoi is under seige. We are on the offensive. It is with us that freedom of action lies. If we fail to exercise the options that our position of strength offers us, then there can be little hope of peace. If we do not move unilaterally to de-escalate the war, then the conflict has many more grim months of life in it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The original three points of Mr. Thant would appear to be a logical starting point for a cooling-off of the war. The Secretary-General has proposed cessation of the bombing in the north, de-escalation of the war in the south, and inclusion of the National Liberation Front in peace talks. It may be that Mr. Thant's proposals will lead us nowhere, but this possibility seems scant reason for refusing to try. The potential of failure and futility has never prevented the Johnson Administration from making more war and it might not hurt for the President to risk it in making peace as well.

It is said that we can not accept the humiliation of compromise. It is said that because we are there, we must win. But if we pursue the war to ultimate military victory, which appears the present goal of our government, we shall have surrendered reason and justice to the temptations of brazen power. We may defeat the communists, but we shall have also defeated ourselves. (s. s.)

Senator Frank Moss, a Democrat from Utah, has asked the National Association of Broadcasters to modify its voluntary code governing cigarette commercials on television.

He wrote to the broadcasters' association: "I believe that the industry has long barred any beer commercials which show a person drinking a glass of beer. It seems to me that this same standard could well be set for cigarette commercials... I would like to see the code amended to actually prohibit the showing of cigarette smoking on television commercials."

The McDowell Papers

By Charles McDowell, Jr.

As soon as I saw Senator Moss's statement I telephoned Miss Philleulah Murkley, a friend of mine who is very active in women's groups concerned with television and cigarettes and almost any other problem you would care to name.

"Have you seen Senator Moss's statement on cigarette commercials?" I asked.

"Yes, and we are very excited about it. We are definitely considering getting up a petition about it," she said.

"What do you think of it, Miss Philly?"

"It isingenious," she said. "Some of the girls think it is an even better idea than the one we suggested in our last petition."

"What was your suggestion?"

"We wanted a voluntary agreement that any time anybody took a puff on a cigarette in a television commercial, he or she would immediately cough."

"I can see how that might meet some resistance."

"Yes," she said. "I personally think the Moss plan is more practical. Perhaps you noticed in his full statement that while he does not want to encourage anyone to smoke, he acknowledges the economic importance of cigarette commercials.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He has staked out a moderate middle ground in the whole controversy. "

"And what is that, Miss Philly?"

"He is for cigarettes but against smoking them. "

"I notice that he mentions beer commercials as a model, " I told her. "They may never actually drink the beer on camera, but they keep pouring it and talking about it and grinning at it, and they always seem to be having a great time. They even sing and dance. Doesn't all that encourage people to drink beer?"

"You have to take the long view, " Miss Philly said. "You have to watch the impact on the rising generation. With any luck at all, we are going to grow up a generation that buys a lot of beer but never drinks it. They will just sit around pouring it and discussing it and watching the little beads of frost run down the outside of the glass. "

"And you think the same thing might work with cigarettes?"

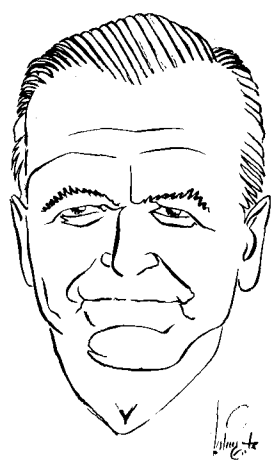
"The chances are about the same, I would say. If we stop showing people actually smoking on television, we might develop a generation of Americans who get their satisfaction by buying cigarettes and taking them along on horseback rides and on walks in the woods by the shore of a cool lake. "

"And anybody who stays in town can have a lot of fun yelling their brand names at passing trucks, " I said.

"Oh yes. But there are more important things to be done once the forces of reform get their foot in the door. If we can stop actual beer-drinking and smoking on television, eventually we can stop scenes showing actual robberies or shootings or misbehavior of any kind. "

"It is a consummation devoutly to be wished by some people, I suppose, " I said uneasily.

"Oh, no, we're not for consummating anything on television! "She said. "That's the point. The motto of the reform movement is consumption without consummation. "



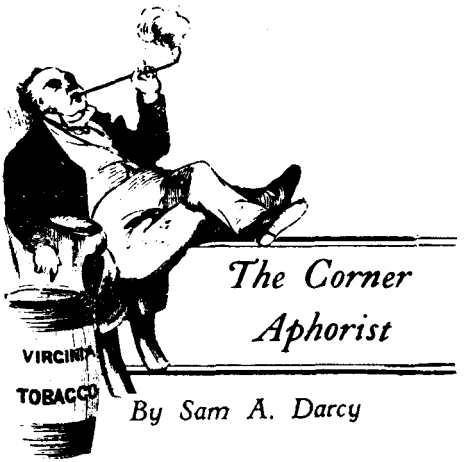
MOSS: Against Smoking?

(Copyright, Newsday, 1967)

Many government officials and private citizens took a remarkably placid attitude towards the outrageous interference by the CIA in internal affairs.

They need to be reminded that in a democracy the ends do not justify the means; rather, the means are the ends.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



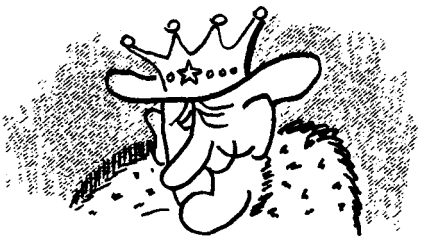
The Corner Aphorist

By Sam A. Darcy

THE DECEPTIO VISUS OF LYNDON THE PIOUS
A Grim Fairy Tale Told in the Year 2001

Once upon a time in the land of the Militaristic Messiahs there lived a king called Lyndon the Pious. Having, in one way and another, gathered in most of the world's wealth, leaving the people of many lands destitute, the Militaristic Messiahs decided upon a crusade to save the souls of the destitutes, to fill their spirit with belief in militaristic democracy, for it is well known that destitutes tend to become materialistic, which is wicked.

They particularly feared a leader of the destitutes called Mao Tze Tung. One of the most pious of the religious orders in the kingdom of the Militaristic Messiahs, the Birchites, said that Mao Tze Tung was actually Jewish and his real name was Matzos Done and that made the whole thing even more sinister. At first, King Lyndon thought that he had a solution when another messiah named Chaing the Runner, who hated Matzos, showed up and asked for a loan. It turned out, however, that all he wanted it for was to buy Geritol for his troops, who were getting quite old and feeble, and the only place they had strength to run to was--well, that's another story.



As was his custom, King Lyndon decided to go to church, and pray to God for guidance. So, with all the cameras grinding, Lyndon the Pious addressed himself to the Lord. But God, being all wise (and with a keen sense of smell too), quickly realized that something wasn't right, so he didn't show up at the praying, especially since this was in Texas where things sometimes become a little flaky. The rumor was then spread that God was dead. He wasn't though. He had only decided not to get involved. Many of God's direct representatives on earth said that the home office didn't like the upcoming holy crusade but King Lyndon, more pious than anything or anyone, said: "We are committed." He did have the support of one cardinal, which sounds like a bird but should not be confused with Lady Bird; the resemblance is superficial and unjust to a nice lady.

The crusades began with much fighting, but it must be related that not many battles were won. The destitutes were stubborn in not wanting Lyndon the Pious's spiritual uplift to the Freedom and Private Enterprise of the Militaristic Messiahs. Lyndon collected more and more taxes for his war, he had more and more men put on uniforms, leave their homes and comforts and go into the swamps to kill destitutes and themselves be killed in turn. "Bomb Them to the Conference Table,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lyndon ordered. The soldiers did, but it didn't work.

King Lyndon did everything to show his people that he was sincere. He wore suits with the pants too long just to show he had problems like regular fellers. He made friends with a broken down vaudevillian from Illinois known as Shaggy Frog, to prove that at heart he was really a democratic man. He went about the country making speeches where he said sincere things from the heart, like:

"I'm not escalating the war only making it more far-reaching."

"We're bombing them to save lives, theirs and ours. It's for their own good."

"We're increasing taxes so that people will have more money."

"We'll have democratic elections in Vietnam but naturally, only people who obey me can vote. Nobody wants malcontents."

"We'll go anywhere, anytime, to make peace, but not with those we're fighting."

It did no good. The people were cruel to him, they said that he had a credibility gap and no matter how much he tried, his true behind was showing. Some days it just doesn't pay to try.

The Militaristic Messiahs didn't win battles but soon they had most of the people in uniform and people in uniform aren't allowed to criticize, even on God's side, so Lyndon took His place. The Chinese and Soviet peoples, who once also belonged to the destitutes, began to help those people against Lyndon the Pious, by this time Lord of the Messianic Militarists. This made Lyndon very angry. "It ain't fittin' for God to give in," he said. He warned that he would send nuclear bombs against them and they would not dare answer back. He did. But they did too. The whole world was blown to bits.

That's why, dear children, I must tell you this tale, sitting nakedly in this barren area, shivering while there is too much heat, happy that we have no mirrors for we are so malformed.

But if the Messianic Militarists don't come back, maybe the time will come when we can yet live happily ever after.

OUR AD RATES ARE LOW

$2.00 per inch

10c per word (classified)

Back Issues

September 1964--Summer 1965 (Dec. '64 & Jan. '65 out of print) $2.00. September 1965--Summer 1966 (June '66 out of print) $2.00. September 1966--Present $1.00. Send check to Idler, 413 6th NE, Washington, D. C.

Renew Early and Save!

If you renew early, using the form below, and save us the trouble of sending you a renewal notice, you also save. Help stamp out renewal notices. Renew today.

Please renew my subscription to the Idler for the period checked:

- ☐ one year: $2.50
- ☐ three years: $7.00
- ☐ five years: $10.00

I enclose the correct amount.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Zip Code .....

Idler 413 6th St. NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter from Lorelei

Dear sam,

How can you expect me not to feel bad. Spring is here and that is woe to me. I just hate it. Imagine all that mess-- wasps, thunderstorms, housecleaning, heat. Think of all that beautiful snow we had. Just wonderful it was.

I have just read a book that tells that Atlantis is beginning to rise again and it's just off the Eastern Shore. It will displace the water so it will cover the whole Atlantic Seaboard and push all of us down under. I always knew this was a lousy place to come to. We had a notion to go to Oklahoma on a land grant but of course they have the darned tornadoes there. The USA has a terrible climate anyway. I want a flying saucer to come here and take me to another planet. Or move to Antartica. Can you find me a job there?

I am making my neighbor nervous. He wants me to drop dead so he can bulldoze this house to make more broiler palaces. They are beginning to regard me as some immortal witch. They watch for my voice to quaver, my back to bend, my eyes to sink into my skull, my hair to fall out. So far I have refused. I feel fine. I got myself on a diet of one good meal a day--at 4:30. I once read that Lily Pons and Andre Kostelanetz went on such a regimen and regained their youthful figures. I don't expect that. I just want to get into my girdle without a derrick.

I am all for the Consular Treaty. We should have consuls in Russia. It's plain stupid not to. What difference will a few dozen more Red spies make? Our FBI should be able to take care of that.

I am sticking my head right under the guillotine knife when I proclaim that I like Russian novels, Russian history, Russian music, Russian dances, Russian vodka, Russian cigarettes, Russian candied flower petals, samovars, Cossaks, bears, ballet dancers. If you all want to deport me, send me to Leningrad, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Yah, I also like Russian pianists, violinists, poets. Go ahead and inform on me; I feel like living dangerously. Besides, Rimsky-Korsakov is my favorite composer. And I detest James Joyce and Norman Mailer. For goodness sakes, what's wonderful about Joyce? Americans are sure hard up for literary giants.

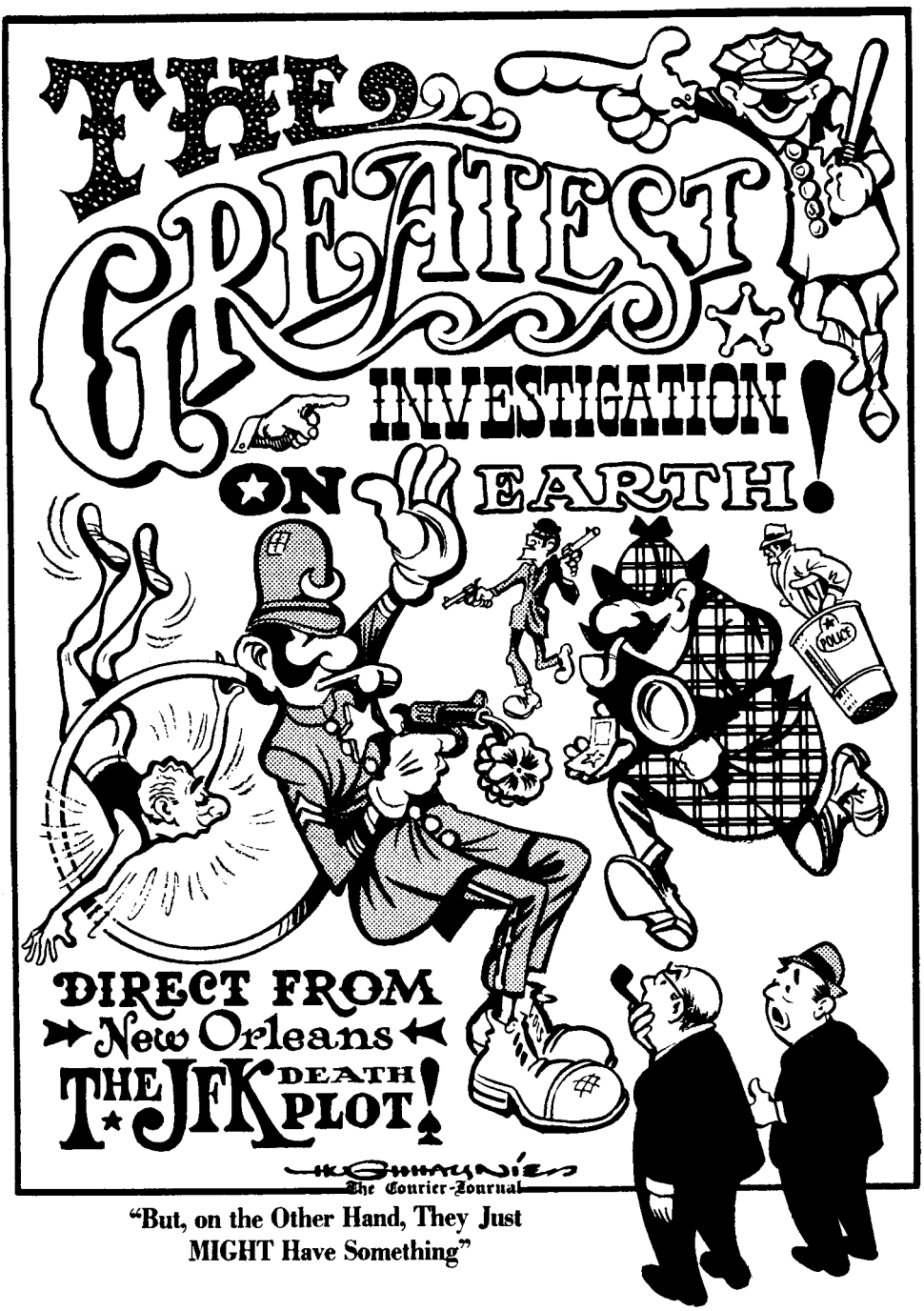
I am listening to WGMS all day until the opera comes on because TV is a waste-land of balls being pushed around, thrown into the air, chased after by a lot of brawny, retarded men. The greatest bore in the world is a TV golf game.

This promises to be a worse than most year. In a hole of a place where a maximum of four cars a day drive by my gate one them had to hit my most beloved pet, Oliver Wendell Holmes. I wouldn't have parted with that beautiful golden creature for $1000. But I had to bury him.

Did I tell you what happened when someone dragged me to Salisbury to the Social Security office to apply for that old age pension? I was put through the wringer and then on the rack and then I picked up my shattered bones and walked out with all kinds of maledictions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HUGH HAYNIE ...



"But, on the Other Hand, They Just MIGHT Have Something"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When asked at a press conference if there was any truth to reports that he was looking for a successor to Henry Cabot Lodge as ambassador to South Vietnam, President Johnson said no. Five days later Mr. Johnson announced that Ambassador-at-Large Ellsworth Bunker was replacing Lodge.

White House Press Secretary George Christian said that the President was telling the truth when he said he was not looking for a successor to Lodge because he had already chosen a successor to Lodge.

This exercise in semantics has led to reports that President Johnson will replace George Christian as press secretary with S. I. Hayakawa.

--Jerry DeMuth

Most of the hassle was about my nationality and citizenship. I guess even you are too young to remember or know that immediately after World War I it was unhealthy for Germans around here and my husband, Capt. Dion, had a very German accent and looked more Prussian than the Kaiser, which was why he had been one of the very best spies the U. S. War Office ever employed. He was aboard a German U-boat when it was sunk off the New Jersey coast in September 1918. Barely escaped with his life and lost all his wonderful instruments of navigation. He had served before that in the British Navy for several years. How can you explain such a business to a peepsqueak who got his job just because he can read and write and has never even heard of Kaiser Bill?

This character threw up his hands and made it plain he thought I was just a most imaginative liar when I told him my late Capt. had been born in San Francisco of a British mother and a German father who were on their way to NewZealand where pappy was Consul General of Germany until he was killed (12 years later) in a land slide along with his wife.

The boy was sent to Germany where his uncle had a big ranch. He didn't like it, ran away and joined the British Navy, was wounded during the Boxer War, and wound up in a crazy USA outfit of 125 super-spies.

Then me, born in Geneva, half Italian and half Swiss. Immense snafu about all that. I marry an Austrian--oh hell--I just couldn't go on with that man's ears opening like a moonflower in the full moon. So I grabbed my documents and walked out with a plague on you and your outfit.

A few days later, believe it or not, the Social Security office sent me a nice guy. A war vet who spent some time in Germany and Switzerland and got all the paper work straightened out except one thing. There is such a ridiculous amount of foolishness connected with everything in this land of the free: they wouldn't take my word that my husband did not have a Social Security card. He died in 1944 and was self-employed. He just did not have one, but they had to check with Baltimore or something.

It's awfully dark and dreary here today, but I am still a cheerfully mean old gal, and wishing you all kinds of happy doings.

Now I am going out to feed my chickens and look at Ollie's grave and just have me a good cry.

Love to all of you,

Lorelei

Route 2

Federalsburg, Md.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Flotsam & Jetsam

☞ From a report in Science Magazine: "We have long been puzzled by the sex life of the polyphemus moth (Antheraea polyphemus). For example, when caged out-of-doors during the proper season, virgin females have routinely attracted the male polyphemus from afar. Yet under laboratory conditions we have (until recently) failed to obtain a single mating among hundreds of these moths when the sexes were placed together in small cages, or in large cages, or even in the Harvard gymnasium. The solution of this paradox proves to be far from trivial."

Perhaps they're disturbed by the sound of the rebounds.

☞ Contemporary Theology Dept.: The Evening Star of Washington recently headlined a column on their church page "The Human Side of Religion."

☞ An ad in a Texas weekly paper contained this announcement from a recently elected judge: "Fellow Citizens of Hemphill County. You have conferred a favor on me which I will be untiring in my effort to repay in the only way which is within my power."

And those who voted the other way can seek a change of venue?

Join The Idler Promotion Staff

THE IDLER can not afford the large-scale promotion campaigns carried out by many magazines. We rely heavily upon our subscribers to help us introduce the magazine to new readers. If you are not already a subscriber, you may use the form below. If you are a subscriber, won't you send THE IDLER to a couple of friends? Enclose three dollars (four dollars abroad) for each subscription. Thanks.

Send to:	Send to:
Name	Name .....
Address	Address .....
.....	.....
Zip Code	Zip Code .....
Card to read from (if gift):	Card to read from (if gift):
.....	.....

IDLER 413 6th St. NE Washington, D.C. 20002

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

☞From a New York Times article on Marshall McLuhan: "'People make a great mistake trying to read me as if I were saying something,' he said. 'I poke these sentences around to probe and feel my way around in our kind of world.....'

"He turned back to his purpose again.

"' I don't want them to believe what I say. I just want them to think. The symbolist poets invented this. I got it from Cruelist Month.' Opening line them. Eliot said "April is the of 'The Wasteland.' Preposterous sentence by itself. But not the way he used it.'"

Nor when the typesetter's the message, baby.

☞A recent ad in Editor & Publisher suggests why we may be seeing a lot of cigars in news photos over the coming months. The ad, for the Cigar Institute of America, announces a $3,000 prize contest for winning photographs of cigars used in newspapers. Among the interesting rules are these:

1. Any press photographer is eligiblewho submits his published news photo which includes a cigar presented in a favorable and interesting manner....

2. No "gag" photos are eligible. However, a woman smoking a cigar is not considered a gag if gracefully presented.

The ad announces that the contest was "conceived in the belief that, under the proper circumstances, the inclusion of a cigar can often add greater impact to a news photo."

If the press will go along with this sort of thing, we see no reason why it can't be expanded to other areas. Like helping the sagging campaign of George Romney. Romney's backers could announce an award to any reporter who submits his published story that presents George Romney in a favorable and interesting manner.

But then, perhaps it would be easier for George just to make sure he always has a stogie in his hand between now and the end of the Cigar Institute's contest.

THE IDLER
413 6th St. NE
Washington, D. C. 20002

Return Requested

DATED MATERIAL

THIRD CLASS MAIL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED